

British Culture 5 - British Drinks

Tea

The first imports of tea to England began in the mid-1650s. As it was an expensive commodity (= product), only wealthy people drank it at the beginning. Then, tea became cheaper and it soon replaced beer as the national drink.

Afternoon tea was introduced by Anna, 7th Duchess of Bedford (1783-1857), in 1841. The Duchess of Bedford introduced afternoon tea because she was bored and hungry. She didn't

like the long interval between lunch and dinner so she asked her servants to bring tea, bread and butter in her room. She gradually invited her friends to share this moment.

On average, a British person drinks three cups a day. British people don't often say 'a cup of tea', they usually say 'a cuppa'.

British people like tea because of its restorative properties. Tea is also good for your heart since it contains antioxidants that prevent cholesterol from damaging the arteries. Antioxidants also help fight cancer. Finally tea contains important minerals like manganese, potassium and fluoride.

(Adapted from <http://www.icons.org.uk/>)



In the past, only visitors and ladies who lunch (= wealthy women who meet for lunch socially) had afternoon tea. But nowadays more and more businessmen are having afternoon tea. Actually afternoon tea is becoming the new business lunch! Afternoon tea is a good way for businessmen to relax and talk, and it is not as long and formal as a business lunch. Men can also have a glass of whisky, play board games or cards. Afternoon Tea costs at least £20.

Beer

Beer is usually served in a special glass called 'pint'. A pint is a little over 0,5 L.

There are four types of beer: ales (especially bitter), stouts, porters, and lagers.

Ales are usually served at room temperature. They can be dark, golden, copper coloured. Some are dry, others are sweet.

Stouts (like Guinness) are very dark and rich beers. Irish stouts are dry whereas English stouts are sweet. Porters are very similar to stouts: they are dark beers too.

Lagers are served cold. They are lighter in colour and sparkling.

There are over 2000 different beer brands in the UK. The British are proud to brew so many different beers!

On average a British person drinks 100 litres of beer every year. The British think that their beers are delicious and nutritious. They even compare them to liquid gold!



Whisky

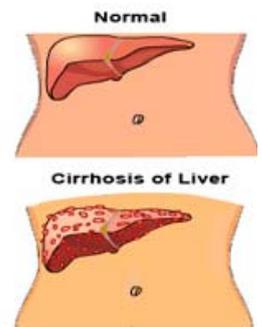
The invention of whisky (also called 'the water of life' in Gaelic) remains a mystery. But there are a few theories. Irish monks (= religious men who live in a monastery) are likely to have been the first to discover how to make whisky. They discovered how to make whisky when they saw perfume being distilled in alembics in the Far East. Since Scotland is only 16 miles away from Ireland in some places, these Irish monks probably exported their invention to Scotland.

Scottish whiskies are generally better known than Irish whiskeys.



Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is becoming a very serious public health problem in the UK. Binge drinking refers to the consumption of a large amount of alcohol in a short



period of time. All organs (especially the liver) are affected by binge drinking. Binge drinking can lead to very serious diseases and you can also die.

Half of all young adults in Britain first got drunk under the age of 15. Alarmingly, 6% confess to getting drunk before they were even 12 years old.

(Picture taken from <http://excessivedrinking.net/binge-drinking>)

Irn Bru

Irn Bru is a carbonated orange-coloured soft drink created in 1901, in Glasgow, Scotland. It is a non-alcoholic drink that contains 32 flavours. The taste of Irn Bru can be described as a mix of fruit and vanilla.

Only two people in the world know the full recipe!

